



20

Change subjects to refocus emails

If you've ever lost important info in a never-ending string of emails, try this:

When you're in an email exchange with members of the board and the discussion expands to cover several points, change the subject line.

A new subject line reflects the importance of the new topic, and changes the focus of the conversation.

It also helps other people see there's something new that needs their attention and isn't part of the last exchange.

This tactic is especially handy for Gmail users, who can easily search for the exchange by subject keyword later.

Info: www.salesand-servicenews.com

Presenting help

Let's face it: There's nothing less stimulating than a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

Fortunately, a new website can liven it up. Use infogr.am to take data from an Excel sheet and turn it into a presentation-ready infographic.

Info: infogr.am

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PUBLIC VALUE PARTNERSHIPS

The Three Rs at work in Montana

Public Value Partnership grants between Montana nonprofit arts organizations and the Montana Arts Council champion the fact that the arts are of benefit to all the citizens of Montana and are worthy of state and federal investment.

Public Value Partnerships utilize three tools we call "The Three Rs" to expand the public value of the work being done by Montana's non-profit arts organizations:

- Building relationships;
- Creating greater relevance and meaning; and
- Establishing return on investment.

MAC believes that using "The Three Rs" strengthens participation, understanding and support from audiences, donors and funders. We'd like to share some of the best examples of these stories with you from 2012:

Building Relationships

Sunburst Foundation, Eureka: As we expand the number of community classes we offer (ranging from making recycled jewelry to selling on eBay to decorative welding) we develop new connections with various segments of the community.

The Tobacco Valley Senior Center was very enthused with our beginning computer classes because the classes are extremely affordable and were small enough to allow the instructor to work with each student one-on-one. The activities director of the local nursing home heard about our classes and asked if we would be willing to organize some for nursing home residents since we have an amazing cadre of teachers now.

In that discussion, we also brainstormed ways in which any residents who were interested might attend our concert series and plays. We agreed to give a special discount on tickets for the residents who attend our events and the volunteers who bring them. This expands our audience as well as creates a great relationship between Sunburst and the nursing home.

From this experience, we learned that people might be interested in participating in Sunburst events and activities but might not be able to do so on their own. It encouraged us to get out into the community to network more with various groups.

Creating Relevance

Billings Symphony Orchestra and Chorale (BSO&C): Ramping up the use of social media as a marketing tool was the most effective specific technique BSO&C used last year to create a greater connection with and more relevance between our programs and our audiences. By better utilizing the functions on Patron Mail, Facebook, and the Billings Symphony website, BSO&C was able to instantaneously interact with 3,000 of patrons and introduce countless more to the Billings Symphony.

PatronMail: BSO&C joined a large sector of the arts community in embracing e-mail marketing, which has become a mainstream part of arts marketers' overall operation.



Billings Symphony Orchestra and Chorale: Music Director Anne Harrigan answers questions from Billings grade school children prior to a concert by a small ensemble of symphony musicians. (Photo by Candy Holzer)

PatronMail software offers comprehensive patron management and effortless staff collaboration in one cohesive unit. It has allowed BSO&C to modernize our marketing efforts.

At least twice a month, 1,824 symphony patrons receive e-postcards promoting performances, special events, and outreach activities. BSO&C is actively working to add the

email addresses of our remaining 1,176 patrons.

Facebook: Facebook is the number-one marketing tool for most small businesses and arts organizations in the United States. BSO&C is utilizing Facebook as part of our marketing strategy.

Facebook has effectively enabled BSO&C to keep connected with audiences, build brand exposure, and

transform existing Facebook fans into symphony patrons. Between July 19, 2011, when Facebook began offering tracking criteria to organizations with Facebook pages, and Sept. 27, 2012, BSO&C Facebook fans grew from 50 to 690. Because of the ability of symphony Facebook fans to share the page with their other Facebook friends, between 1,500 and 2,200 people are exposed to the Symphony Facebook page in each week preceding a BSO&C concert or event.

Billings Symphony Website, www.billings-symphony.org: The BSO&C website benefits both our traditional audience and those individuals

new to the Billings Symphony who want to learn more about symphonic music, concerts, and outreach and education. It also provides a medium for consistent branding and promoting our mission, and facilitates ticket sales by allowing patrons to purchase tickets online.

Our website includes descriptions of the each concert offered, biographies on the guest artists appearing with the symphony, outreach activities, and giving opportunities.

Return on Investment Alpine Theatre Project,

Whitefish: This year, Alpine Kids Theatre Project (AKTP) involved 111 students ages 6-13 in a production of Disney's *The Little Mermaid Jr.* Below was a response to that program from one of the parents:

"Once again, I am blown away at what an amazing gift you two are to our community. I was brought to tears many times this weekend, and was in a fairly consistent state of goosebumps, watching as it all came together, and so many kids/families lives were touched, and/or altered for the better, due to your hard work and dedication to the performing arts in our community.

"There was the child with autism, whose family, at one time, wondered if he'd ever speak. There was the little girl whose father died a few years ago, and life has been very difficult ever since, who got to have a lead role that might not otherwise ever have been possible for her. There were painfully shy kids coming out of their 'shells,' and there were kids like mine, who love to sing, dance and perform, but might not ever get the chance if it weren't for your program that accepts every child, not just the top 25 'best fits'."

— Christina Schmidt



Alpine Theatre Project: Backstage at "The Little Mermaid Jr."

The "child with autism" to whom she is referring is Ty Espeseth, who played "Grimsby" in this production. According to Ty's mother, he was diagnosed with autism and never spoke until the age of 4. During AKTP rehearsals, we watched Ty gradually emerge from his shell. He began interacting with other students on stage and off. He began using his voice to command the stage, and even began improvising a little.

After the production, Ty's mother

approached ATP Artistic Director Betsi Morrison and Executive Director Luke Walrath with tears in her eyes. She said that she had never seen such remarkable progress in her son's socialization before being involved in the AKTP program.

She even brought Ty's therapists to a performance so they could witness his progress. Even they admitted they were unable to get him to open up like that in his therapy sessions.

"You have no idea what you have just done for my son," Ty's mother told Betsi and Luke. Such is the power of theatre.

The mother of a child with autism had never seen such remarkable progress in her son's socialization before being involved in the Alpine Kids Theatre Project program. "You have no idea what you have just done for my son," she said.